

Title:

The Sandy Berger Scandal Facts

Word Count:

554

Summary:

Controversy surrounded and continues to surround Samuel "Sandy" Berger when he was fined \$50,000 by Magistrate Judge Deborah Robinson on September 8, 2005 for mishandling of sensitive and classified documents. Berger also lost his security clearance for three years. What are the facts regarding the Sandy Berger scandal?

Sandy Berger pled guilty.

Sandy Berger admitted to deliberately pilfering classified documents from the National Archives. Five documents about the Cli...

Keywords:

sandy berger,scandal,politics

Article Body:

Controversy surrounded and continues to surround Samuel "Sandy" Berger when he was fined \$50,000 by Magistrate Judge Deborah Robinson on September 8, 2005 for mishandling of sensitive and classified documents. Berger also lost his security clearance for three years. What are the facts regarding the Sandy Berger scandal?

Sandy Berger pled guilty.

Sandy Berger admitted to deliberately pilfering classified documents from the National Archives. Five documents about the Clinton administration's actions regarding the millennium attack plots went missing and Berger admitted to taking all of them. He also admitted to taking home notes which he himself made in the course of his visits to the Archives.

At first, Sandy Berger held that he inadvertently stuffed in the classified documents with his other notes and papers. However, he soon admitted that his actions were deliberate. It would be quite difficult to prove that he "inadvertently" took both sets of documents both times in September and October and that he "inadvertently" cut the first set up.

Sandy Berger destroyed three of the five documents.

Sandy Berger visited the Archives on September 2003 and October 2003. On his first visit, he took three documents and on his second visit, he took two documents. He took scissors to the first three documents from his September visit. The last two documents were returned to the Archives after the officials contacted Berger about the missing documents.

These documents were all about the Clinton administration's memos about the millennium attack plots. All of these documents were classified materials and were only made available to Berger because he was there on Bill Clinton's orders. Nobody, not even former presidents, has any authority to remove classified documents from the Archives.

The investigation began in October 2003. Though word about the investigation went around in the second quarter of 2004, the criminal investigation was actually instigated on October 2003. Prior to this, the Archive employees noticed that some documents that Berger reviewed went missing in September. On October, the employees coded the documents Berger was likely to read so that they will know if these were also taken. The Archive officials called Berger on October 4 that the materials he had reviewed had gone missing. Because Berger cannot produce more than two documents, the FBI was brought in.

The Archive employees did not follow procedure. The Archive employees first noticed the missing files in September 2003. Instead of calling the FBI, however, they called former President Bill Clinton's legal counsel Bruce Lindsey. This was against procedure. In matters involving missing classified documents, the FBI should have been called in immediately because this was a federal offense under the law. Of course, at that time, the National Archives head honcho was a Bill Clinton appointee, John Carlin, who was terminated from his position when the Sandy Berger scandal was brought to light.

Sandy Berger got off on a plea bargain. Apparently, the U.S Justice Department believed that Berger's "lapse in judgment" wasn't as significant as it had been painted up to be. The U.S State prosecutors let Sandy Berger off lightly in a plea bargain agreement that stipulated a fine of \$10,000 and a loss of security clearance for three years. Magistrate Judge Robinson thought \$10,000 dollars wasn't enough and increased the fine to \$50,000. The other terms of the agreement remained unchanged. There was no prison sentence indicated.